Committees were models of unrelieved dejection. They formed a part of the litany of every War Committee.

How did the Lords of the Admiralty propose to cope with a menace which was gradually strangling the power of the Allies? In another chapter I propose to tell the dismal story of the way the President of the Board of Trade confronted his share of the problem. In a memorandum to the Asquith Government in November, 1916, the Admirals reported:—

> "Of all the problems which the Admiralty have to consider, no doubt the most formidable and the most embarrassing is that raised by submarine attack upon merchant vessels. *No conclusive answer has as yet been found to this form of warfare; perhaps no conclusive answer ever will be found. We must for the present be content with palliation*"

That is to say, we do not see how the patient's life can be saved, but we can prolong his agony—perhaps ease it a little!

This paralytic document was written over two years after the submarine had begun its devastating activities. The Germans had not yet put a great number of these large submarines in the water, neither had they started their campaign of indiscriminate destruction. When the report was penned by a trembling hand we were

losing ships at the rate of 175,000 tons a month. When the numbers of the large type had doubled, and the unrestricted sinkings began, the destruction of tonnage mounted up until it reached the figure of 526,000